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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses hope UNPROFOR will be maintained in former Yugoslavia, saying withdrawal would cause situation there to deteriorate; says United Nations is preparing fall-back position in case certain States decide to pull out peace-keepers.

+ General Assembly condemns militant actions of Serb authorities in Croatia; adopts other resolutions on peace-keeping operations, UNRWA and peaceful uses of outer space, on recommendation of Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

+ Human rights constitute foundation and supreme goal of United Nations activities, Secretary-General says in message for Human Rights Day; stresses need for Member States to ratify and abide by rights agreements.

+ Security Council congratulates Joaquim Chissano on his inauguration as President of Mozambique and on installation of new National Assembly; expresses satisfaction at United Nations role in Mozambican reconciliation process.

+ General Assembly authorizes Secretary-General to commit up to $248 million gross to maintain UNPROFOR, UNOSOM II and UNDOF until end of year.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina says United Nations should take urgent action to ensure humanitarian aid reaches Sarajevo, noting onset of winter there; UNHCR aid convoy reaches Bihac pocket.

+ IFAD Executive Board approves eleven new projects worth $227 million at fifty-third session in Rome.

+ 1994 NGO World Forum on Drug Demand Reduction to be held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 December, hosted by Thailand and United Nations Drug Control Programme.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed hope that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) would be maintained in the former

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Yugoslavia, warning that withdrawal of the Force would lead to a degradation of the situation there. However, he told correspondents at Headquarters that the United Nations was preparing "a fall-back position" in case certain Member States decided to withdraw their peace-keepers. He added that no demands had been received from Member States in that regard. He made those comments after briefing the Security Council on his recent travels, including his visit to Sarajevo.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali went on to say that he was in daily contact with the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) regarding the situation in the former Yugoslavia. He stressed that cooperation between the United Nations and NATO, and between NATO and UNPROFOR on the ground, was excellent.

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The General Assembly today condemned the militant actions of the self-proclaimed authorities in the Serb-controlled territories of Croatia. In a resolution adopted by 142 votes in favour to none against, with 18 abstentions, it requested the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to immediately cease any military and logistical support to those authorities. The Assembly concluded that the Federal Republic's activities aimed at integrating the occupied territories into its administrative, military and transportation systems were illegal, null and void, and must cease immediately. It also urged that Croatia's authority be restored in its entire territory and urged respect for human and minority rights there.

The Assembly adopted the resolution on Croatia on the recommendation of its Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization). It also adopted texts on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and the report of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People.

Acting without a vote, the Assembly adopted a wide-ranging resolution on peace-keeping operations. That text provided guidance on mandates, consultation and coordination mechanisms, evaluation, and command and control. It also dealt with finances, resources, planning, organization and effectiveness, the safety and security of United Nations personnel, agreements with troop contributors, public information policy, and cooperation with regional organizations.

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Human rights illuminate all United Nations activities, and constitute their foundation and their supreme goal, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message for Human Rights Day, commemorated annually on 10 December, he said the protection of human rights was a constant struggle which could not be won without the participation of every man and woman.

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The primary aim of Human Rights Day was to commemorate the General Assembly's adoption, in 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he continued. By that text, the international community proclaimed its faith in the fundamental rights of the individual and in the dignity and worth of the human person. Since 1948, the United Nations had safeguarded not only individual rights, but also civil and political rights. It had also extended its protection to new areas, seeking to prevent genocide, slavery, torture, and discrimination based on race, gender, religion or belief. Moreover, the Assembly had proclaimed the right to the environment, the right to peace, the right to food security and, above all, the right to development.

The United Nations must continue that work, the Secretary-General went on to say. It must also guarantee those rights, particularly through the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commission for Human Rights, and the Centre for Human Rights. Most importantly, it must constantly encourage Member States to ratify human rights agreements and abide by them.

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The Security Council has congratulated Joaquim Chissano on the occasion of his inauguration as President of Mozambique and the inauguration of the new National Assembly following that country's recent elections. In a message from its President, Manzi Bakuramutsa (Rwanda), to President Chissano, the Council expressed satisfaction regarding those important steps towards national reconciliation in Mozambique. The Council also noted with satisfaction the role of the United Nations in that process.

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The General Assembly has authorized the Secretary-General to commit up to $248 million gross to maintain three United Nations peace-keeping operations until the end of the year. It took that action yesterday by adopting, without a vote, three decisions approved by its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The decisions authorized the Secretary-General to commit: $140 million for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) for December; $106 million for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for November and December; and $2.7 million gross for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for December.

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The Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations, Mohamed Sacirbey, today said the Organization should take urgent action to ensure that humanitarian aid could reach Sarajevo. Speaking at a press conference at Headquarters, he noted that road and air links to the city had been cut as a result of the siege by Bosnian Serb forces. The people of Sarajevo were in desperate need of humanitarian relief, particularly with the onset of winter, he added.

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At the same press conference, British actress Vanessa Redgrave presented a declaration calling on citizens of all countries to oppose the plan to permanently divide Sarajevo, and to join in the struggle to preserve tolerance and freedom there. "At this critical moment for us all, citizens of the world community as well as citizens of Sarajevo bear responsibility for the fate of civilized values", she said.

Meanwhile, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) aid convoy arrived in Bihac today -- the first such convoy to reach the pocket since 1 October. A third resupply convoy also got through to the battalion of Bangladeshi peace-keepers stationed there.

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The Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) approved eleven new projects worth $227 million at the end of its fifty-third session in Rome this week. The new projects, to which IFAD is providing $136 million mostly in soft loans, will benefit 350,000 poor households in Eritrea, Chile, Mali, Kenya, Zambia, Bolivia, Costa Rica, China, Lebanon, Albania and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The session, chaired by IFAD President Fawzi Al-Sultan, also approved two technical assistance grants: $400,000 for the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region, and $300,000 for the Near East and North Africa Management Training in Agriculture.

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The 1994 NGO World Forum on Drug Demand Reduction will be held from 12 to 16 December in Bangkok, Thailand. It will be hosted by the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand, with support from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Some 500 representatives of organizations concerned with drug issues and social welfare from all over the world will participate in the Forum, in order to pool their experience and form new partnerships to reduce the demand for drugs.

The focus of the Forum -- a major event of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991-2000) -- will be demand reduction in the context of overall social development. One objective will be the establishment of a mechanism to coordinate the work of non-governmental groups through shared experience and expertise. The Forum will also seek to arrange for non-governmental organizations to report on drug demand reduction activities to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand will address the opening ceremony on 12 December. Giorgio Giacomelli, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the UNDCP, will give the keynote address on 13 December.

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